



# Chancellor's Report

Chancellor John Pugh

uas.alaska.edu/chancellor  
June 2012 Meeting

## Commencement 2012



*Chancellor John Pugh hugs Bachelor of Arts in Art graduate Ryan Cortes at the UAS Juneau Commencement Ceremony. Photo by Yosuke Sano.*

UAS honored graduates from Summer and Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 at commencement ceremonies in Ketchikan, Sitka and Juneau May 4-6, 2012. A total of 620 candidates received Masters, Bachelors and Associates degrees as well as certificates and occupational endorsements from the Juneau, Ketchikan and Sitka UAS campuses. Five-hundred twenty-nine degrees, certificates and endorsement went to Juneau graduates. Twenty-four states are represented in this year's group of graduates, 87 percent are from Alaska.

## Egan Library Holds Poetry Contest

UAS English major Kate Laster won the Free Verse category in a contest held by the Egan Library in honor of April's National Poetry month.



*Kate Laster reads her poem, "Free Verse" at a celebration announcing the winners of the Egan Library Poetry Contest, April 20, 2012. Photo by Ryan Cortes.*

## UAS Faculty Organizes Bioblitz



*Mathematics faculty Megan Buzby assists a fourth-grader with species identification at a BioBlitz near the UAS Auke Lake campus. Photo by Chip McMillan.*

Education faculty Chip McMillan and math faculty Megan Buzby, helped Auke Bay Elementary school students identify flora such as small plants in the rainforest understory during a BioBlitz for fourth-graders on Friday, May 4, 2012. McMillan was a key organizer of the event, a collaboration the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, the U.S. Forest Service, the University of Alaska Southeast, NOAA, the Juneau School District and the Alaska Coastal Rainforest Center. "Our goals included raising our Juneau kids' awareness of our local flora and fauna; help them understand the concept of biodiversity, appreciate our

local environment, and generally just get them outside observing nature," said McMillan. A BioBlitz is a short term (24 hours or less) survey of all species found in a given area.

## Rainforest Symposium is a Success

The Alaska Coastal Rainforest Center brought together scientists from throughout the United States and Canada at a symposium to synthesize best practices, foster collaboration for future projects, and improve community engagement in science and resource management.

Coastal Temperate Rainforests: Integrating Science, Resource Management, and Communities took place April 17-19 in Juneau.

The three day event included impressive keynote speakers such as Dr. Peter Kareiva, Chief Scientist and Director of Science, The Nature Conservancy; Dr. Kirk R. Johnson, Member of the Committee on the Importance of Deep-Time Geologic Records for Understanding Climate Change Impacts and Dr. Dolores Garza, Professor Emerita of the University of Alaska, presenting on Traditional Ecological Knowledge.

There were more than 35 speakers, academics at leading universities, researchers and directors from state and federal agencies, resource managers, policymakers, traditional knowledge bearers, and educators. The presentations and discussions linked with projects in ecosystem management, land planning, forest management, recreation and wilderness resources, fisheries management, trans-boundary data integration and policy decision making, conservation, climate change, and education.

Symposium sponsors were the University of Alaska Southeast, U.S. Forest Service Alaska Region, Tongass National Forest, Pacific Northwest Research Station, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Alaska

Region and North Pacific Landscape Conservation Cooperative, Wilburforce Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Geological Survey, and Juneau Economic Development Council.

Based at University of Alaska Southeast, the Alaska Coastal Rainforest Center is a collaborative environment designed to integrate science, resource management and communities.



*Provost Rick Caulfield thanks organizers of the first annual Alaska Coastal Rainforest Symposium at the closing dinner, April 19, 2012. Photo by Katie Bausler.*

## UAS Outdoor Studies Completes Icefield Trek

*by Abbie Lowell, Juneau Empire*



*Outdoor Studies students tent city on the Juneau Icefield, April 2012. Photo by Travis Haskin.*

For University of Alaska Southeast student Bradford Chadsey, the outdoors is the ultimate classroom.

After completing a human-powered trek across the Juneau Icefield last week, he said there are few words that act as proper descriptors for the expedition. Instead, he settled on one simple conclusion.

"For me," he said. "it was a life-changing experience."

Chadsey was one of eight UAS Outdoor Studies students, led by ODS program head Forest Wagner, who hiked and skied their way across the Juneau Icefield from April 12 to 17. Travis Haskin and Samantha Becker assisted. The group of 11 flew with Ward Air to the base of the Matthes Glacier, eight miles from the Canadian border, to begin the journey on Thursday, April 12. The following day, over a 10-hour period, they all climbed the 5,800-foot Exploration Peak.

Chadsey said it was on the second day that he realized the scope of what faced the group: besides the climb up Exploration, there were still approximately 30 miles left to travel back to civilization.

On April 14, the group began the trek toward Juneau.

"I'm particularly proud of this trek," Wagner said. "It was an accomplishment. People are not dropped off on the icefield to ski home all that often."

Wagner said for the students, this trip was a culmination of all the different climbing skills that he teaches, starting in the fall with rock climbing, then backcountry navigation and travel, and then, in the spring, ice climbing and glacier rescue.

"This (mountaineering course) represents the weaving of a bunch of different skill sets, from navigation to glacier travel to technical climbing, along with the hardness factor and the ability to endure multiple days," Wagner said.

While this wasn't Wagner's first trip across the icefield, he said one day in particular stands out above the rest.

"It was our longest travel day, about 10 miles, and it was just gorgeous," he said.

On this day, like so many over the course of the week, the group enjoyed great weather. They also relished in easy travel and breathtaking scenery as they moved past the hulking Mendenhall Towers.

"It's nice to watch these students really see these mountains up close," he said. "The scale is recognized as being significant and on the backside of the Mendenhall Towers, there are walls the size of El Cap."

"El Cap," officially known as El Capitan, is a vertical, granite rock formation in Yosemite National Park, located on the north side of Yosemite Valley, near its western end.

Becker said she remembers that particularly "awesome" experience well.

"These are mountains I see every day from campus or from the road, but to be up close to them and ski next to them was amazing," she said.

Becker, who acted as a teaching assistant on the trip, said it was a treat to experience the icefield first-hand and at a human-powered pace.

"I study the icefield on a scientific level and I hear of tourists touring the area," she said.

But for Becker, it was rewarding to experience the icefield on such a personal and intimate level.

In the past, Wagner said the mountaineering groups have done various "mountain objectives" around town. From the end of the road to ski traverses on Douglas, and even climbs via Blackerby Ridge. But he said he thinks the premier destination for teaching mountaineering in the Juneau area is the icefield.

Because, he said, "you're more likely to get high mountain conditions; it's drier, it's colder and it's just, kind of, better."

"Plus, I think it's empowering for someone to go on the icefield, get out there and climb a legitimate mountain, ski home and put all these skills together," Wagner said.

With more than 70 pounds of gear on their backs and after skiing across and up the Taku Glacier, then descending the South Branch of the Mendenhall Glacier, the group walked out on the West Glacier Trail on Tuesday, April 17.

Besides Wagner, Becker, Haskin and Chadsey, the participants included Chelsea Bomba, Miles Gayton, Kaytlin Roberson, Tom Schwartz, Julia Stouber, Nicole Tarcsay and Michaela Twarog.